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NEW SUPERINTENDENT SELECTED FOR GRAY'S REEF NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

George R. Sedberry has been selected to become the new superintendent of NOAA's Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary. Sedberry will oversee management and operations at the sanctuary, located off the Georgia coast. He will assume his new duties in June 2007.

"The NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program is honored to bring aboard someone of George Sedberry's experience and scientific background to Gray's Reef," said Billy Causey, director of the NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program's Southeast Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Region. "George Sedberry's background as a scientist and administrator is going to give us tremendous opportunity to move the program forward."

Sedberry comes to Gray's Reef from the Marine Resources Institute of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, Charleston, S.C., where he is assistant director and senior marine scientist.

Sedberry has been the principal investigating scientist on numerous studies in the waters of the South Atlantic Bight, including Gray's Reef. His professional experience includes research on marine fishes from the estuary, continental shelf and slope, deep sea and tropical coral reefs. He has been the principal investigator on Marine Resources Monitoring, Assessment and Prediction Program (MARMAP) and associated Marine Fisheries Initiative projects aimed at stock assessments of reef fishes from North Carolina to Florida. He also has extensive studying marine invertebrates from shelf, slope and deep-sea waters as well as university teaching.

Sedberry served two terms on the Gray's Reef Sanctuary Advisory Council beginning in 1999 and has also served on the sanctuary's research area working group and the advisory council's research advisory panel.

"I am very excited about applying my experience toward the continued management of Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary," said Sedberry. "I look forward to working with the staff and user groups to insure that the sanctuary is managed for protection of its resources, allowing for compatible use, and that the broader connections of the sanctuary to other ocean habitats off the southeast coast can be fully understood and appreciated by scientists, managers and the public."

Sedberry replaces Reed Bohne, who served as Gray's Reef sanctuary manager from July 1990 until September 2006, when he became director of the sanctuary program's Northeast and Great Lakes Region. The Gray's Reef sanctuary's education

coordinator, Cathy Sakas, and research coordinator, Greg McFall, have served as acting co-managers in the interim period.

Designated in 1981, Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary is one of the largest near shore live-bottom reefs off the southeastern United States, encompassing approximately 23 square miles. The sanctuary consists of a series of sandstone outcroppings and ledges up to 10 feet in height, in a predominantly sandy, flat-bottomed sea floor. The live bottom and ledge habitat support an abundant reef fish and invertebrate community. Loggerhead sea turtles, a threatened species, also use Gray's Reef year-round for foraging and resting, and the reef is near the only known winter calving ground for the highly endangered North Atlantic Right Whale.

NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary Program, which manages the Gray's Reef sanctuary, seeks to increase the public awareness of America's marine resources and maritime heritage by conducting scientific research, monitoring, exploration and educational programs. Today, the sanctuary program manages 13 sanctuaries and one national marine monument that together encompass more than 150,000 square miles of America's ocean and Great Lakes natural and cultural resources.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is celebrating 200 years of science and service to the nation. From the establishment of the Survey of the Coast in 1807 by Thomas Jefferson to the formation of the Weather Bureau and the Commission of Fish and Fisheries in the 1870s, much of America's scientific heritage is rooted in NOAA.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 60 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

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On the Web:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

NOAA 200th Celebration: <http://www.celebrating200years.noaa.gov>

NOAA National Ocean Service: www.nos.noaa.gov

National Marine Sanctuary Program: <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov>

Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary: <http://www.graysreef.noaa.gov>